



Leading Quality Addiction Treatment in the Northern Rockies

EXHIBIT 9
DATE 2/19/07
HB 634

February 19, 2007

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 634

David W. Cunningham, MHA ACATA
Chief Executive Officer

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I appreciate the opportunity to address your committee regarding the need to expand the funding capacity of the Montana Health Care Financing Authority. I am the CEO of Rimrock Foundation, Montana's oldest and largest addiction treatment center serving over 3000 patients annually and the recipient of funds from this program.

Quite simply, without these funds, we would not be able to serve the indigent and low income patients we now care for. In fact, in the past five years, this population has been the largest source of our growth both in numbers and in facilities. Because we can acquire low interest money, we have been able to expand our facilities and services to more of those Montanans who could not otherwise pay for their care. This however is not the only patient population that benefits.

Last summer, I accompanied a group of Montana leaders to study a broad spectrum of the Canadian Healthcare system for the purpose of determining whether Montana could improve its system. One of the most concerning things we found was that while the delivery of care was excellent, there is a looming crisis because they have not been able to properly maintain or upgrade their infrastructure. Old, outdated buildings and equipment will severely limit the quality of their care in the near future. This is not the case in Montana, thanks in large measure, to our ability to borrow low interest money from the Montana Healthcare Financing Authority.

The expertise and specialization the authority brings to the borrower is enormously helpful and has funded our growth for over twenty years. This is a program that has no downside—it does not cost Montana, it permits us to maintain and expand our vital infrastructure, and it has been a large reason why, at Rimrock Foundation, our rates increased only 1% a year for the past five years. I urge you to support HB 634.